

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claims 1, 12, 19, 21 and 26, and add new claims 27-36 as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for dechucking a substrate, comprising the steps of:

actuating a substrate support to project~~projecting~~ a first set of lift pins a first distance above a surface of the ~~the~~ ~~[[a]]~~ substrate support; and to project~~projecting~~ a second set of lift pins a second distance above the surface of the substrate support that is less than the first distance projected by the first set of lift pins;

causing the substrate to form a bowed region between a plurality of the first set of lift pins by contacting the ~~the~~ ~~[[a]]~~ substrate with the first set of lift pins; and

contacting the substrate in the bowed region with the second set of lift pins.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the second set of lifts pins projects at a position radially inward of the first set of lift pins.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the difference in the distances projected by the first and second sets of lift pins is at least 2mm.

- 4-6. (Canceled)

7. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the substrate is caused to bow a distance that is about equal to the difference in projection distances between the first and second sets of lift pins.

8. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of: overcoming a residual attraction between the substrate and the substrate support proximate to the bowed region of the substrate;

breaking contact between the substrate and the second set of lift pins; and

supporting the substrate upon the first set of lift pins in a spaced apart relation to the substrate support.

9. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of:
actuating a lift plate to contact the first set of lift pins before contacting the second set of lift pins.

10. (Original) The method of claim 9 further comprising the steps of:
contacting the first set of lift pins with a raised rim of the lift plate that projects from a center portion of the lift plate; and
contacting the second set of lift pins with the center portion.

11. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
lowering the substrate support so that the first and second sets of lift pins are contacted by a lift plate.

12. (Currently Amended) A method for dechucking a substrate comprising the steps of:

moving a lift plate towards a substrate support to displace a first set of lift pins and a second set of lift pins;

extending the first set of lift pins with the lift plate a first distance above a support surface of the substrate support;

extending the second set of lift pins with the lift plate a second distance above the support surface of the substrate support, wherein the second distance is less than the first distance;

causing the substrate to form a bowed region between a plurality of the first set of lift pins by contacting the [[a]] substrate with the first set of lift pins; and

contacting the substrate in the bowed region with the second set of lift pins.

13. (Original) The method of claim 12, wherein the second set of lift pins projects at a position radially inward of the first set of lift pins.

14-16. (Canceled)

17. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 12, wherein the substrate is caused to bow a distance that is about equal to the difference in projection distances between the first and second sets of lift pins.

18. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 12, further comprising the step of:

overcoming a residual attraction between the substrate and the substrate support proximate to the bowed region of the substrate;

breaking contact between the substrate and the second set of lift pins; and

supporting the substrate upon the first set of lift pins in a spaced apart relation to the substrate support.

19. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 12 further comprising the steps of:

actuating the [[a]] lift plate to contact the first set of lift pins before contacting the second set of lift pins.

20. (Original) The method of claim 19 further comprising the steps of:

contacting the first set of lift pins with a raised rim of the lift plate that projects from a center portion of the lift plate; and

contacting the second set of lift pins with the center portion.

21. (Currently Amended) A method for dechucking a substrate, comprising:

actuating a substrate support to displace a first set of lift pins and a second set of lift pins, the first set of lift pins movably disposed through the substrate support below a perimeter of the substrate, the second set of lift pins movably disposed through the substrate support below a center portion of the substrate and radially inwards of the first set of lift pins;

projecting the ~~the~~ ~~[[a]]~~ first set of lift pins ~~below a perimeter of the substrate~~ a first distance above a surface of the ~~the~~ ~~[[a]]~~ substrate support; and

projecting the ~~the~~ ~~[[a]]~~ second set of lift pins ~~positioned below a center portion of the substrate radially inwards of the first set of lift pins~~ a second distance above the surface of the substrate support that is less than the first distance projected by the first set of lift pins.

22. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 21, wherein the projected distances are at least 2 mm apart.

23. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 21, wherein projecting the first set of lift pins lifts at least a portion of the substrate to a spaced-apart relation to the substrate support and causes the substrate to bow in a central region thereof.

24. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 23, wherein projecting the second set of lift pins contacts the bowed region of the substrate, putting the entire substrate in a spaced-apart relation to the substrate support.

25. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 21, further comprising:
actuating a lift plate to contact the first set of lift pins before contacting the second set of lift pins.

26. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 21, further comprising:
actuating a lift plate to contact the first set of lift pins with a rim of the lift plate that projects from a center portion of the lift plate, the center portion that contacts the second set of lift pins.

27. (New) A method for dechucking a substrate comprising:
projecting a first set of lift pins to lift a perimeter of the substrate a first distance above a surface of a substrate support;

projecting a second set of lift pins to lift a center portion of the substrate, the second set of lift pins positioned radially inwards of the first set of lift pins; and then projecting the first set of lift pins to lift the substrate to a transfer position.

28. (New) The method of claim 27, wherein the first set of lift pins and the second set of lift pins have projected distances that are at least 2 mm apart.

29. (New) The method of claim 27, wherein projecting the first set of lift pins initially lifts at least a portion of the substrate to a spaced-apart relation to the substrate support and causes the substrate to bow in a central region thereof.

30. (New) The method of claim 29, wherein projecting the second set of lift pins initially contacts the bowed region of the substrate, putting the entire substrate in a spaced-apart relation to the substrate support.

31. (New) The method of claim 27, further comprising actuating a lift plate to contact the first set of lift pins before contacting the second set of lift pins.

32. (New) The method of claim 27, further comprising actuating a lift plate to contact the first set of lift pins with a rim of the lift plate that projects from a center portion that contacts the second set of lift pins.

33. (New) A method for dechucking a substrate, comprising:
contacting a plurality of a first set of lift pins by a surface prior to contacting a second set of lift pins by the surface to lift a perimeter of the substrate with the first set of lift pins and a center portion of the substrate with the second set of lift pins;
projecting the first set of lift pins a first distance above a surface of a substrate support and; and
projecting the second set of lift pins a second distance less than the first distance above the surface of the substrate support.

34. (New) The method of claim 33, wherein the surface includes a center portion and a rim that projects from the center portion.

35. (New) The method of claim 33, wherein the first set of lift pins have a first length and the second set of the lift pins have a second length which is less than the first length.

36. (New) The method of claim 33, wherein projecting the first set of lift pins causes the substrate to form a bowed region between the first set of lift pins and the second set of lift pins contacts the substrate in the bowed region